

**Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development****Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center**      **Federal Tax ID: 20-1113317****Project Title:****Project Type: Equipment and Materials****Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center - Exhibit Completion****State Funding Requested: \$1,000,000**  
One-Time Need**House District: 9 / E****Brief Project Description:**

Vital support from the State of AK helped build the Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center, which was completed ahead of schedule and under budget in Summer 2008. This request for FY10 capital funding will ensure that 9,000 square feet of high quality and authentic exhibits can help cruise ship visitors safely and efficiently access and enjoy Interior communities.

**Funding Plan:****Total Cost of Project: \$32,617,893**

	<u>Funding Secured</u>		<u>Other Pending Requests</u>		<u>Anticipated Future Need</u>	
	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FY</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FY</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FY</i>
Federal Funds	\$16,203,145	2000-05, 08				
State Funds	\$6,100,000	05,06,07,08				
Denali Commission	\$313,790	2005				
Rasmuson Foundation	\$1,000,000	2008				
Local Funds	\$262,000	2006				
Other Funds	\$3,342,772	2003-2009	\$396,186	2009-2010	\$4,000,000	2009-2010
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$27,221,707</b>		<b>\$396,186</b>		<b>\$4,000,000</b>	

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

The Morris Thompson Center expects to serve more than 150,000 visitors in its first year of operation. Historical statistics provided by the Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau indicate that 50% of those visitors are cruise ship passengers.

The center's mission, #1 is to: Educate residents and visitors about Interior Alaska's cultures, attractions, lands, and waters via exhibits and programs so that residents and visitors can safely and efficiently access and enjoy them.

The exhibits will feature: stewardship and safety information, encouraging visitors to explore Interior and Northern Alaska parks, waters, attractions and rural destinations safely and efficiently. This will include information related to efficiency of movement to rural communities that operate tourism related enterprises.

More than a decade ago, diverse organizations in Interior Alaska struggled with inadequate space that made it difficult to meet constituent needs. They joined together to plan a facility to provide greater public service to more people at reduced costs. The Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center is a public/private partnership consisting of the following organizations:

1. Alaska Public lands Information Center (APLIC), part of the National Park Service
2. Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau (FCVB), a non-profit community organization
3. Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), a regional tribal non-profit organization representing 42 tribes in Interior Alaska
4. Denakkanaaga, a regional Alaska Native Elder's organization

The synergy created by co-locating these entities provides significant benefits to each organization. Construction costs are shared, operating costs are significantly reduced, and programs complement each other in a way that allows each partner to better fulfill its individual mission. The sum of this partnership is truly greater than its individual parts.

The partnership and the project also create a fitting legacy to the late Morris Thompson, who was widely recognized as a bridge between cultures. Many have worked to encourage urban and rural Alaska to come together and find common ground. The partnership embodied in the Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center is the physical manifestation of that goal. As Leadership Team member Byron Mallott describes, "If we can get it right in the Morris Thompson Center, it can be an example to others of how we can work together for the benefit of all Alaskans."

The partners in the project incorporated as a 501(c)3 organization in 2004, and have worked together to build, own, and operate a new 38,720 square foot facility on the banks of the Chena River in downtown Fairbanks. Construction was completed in Fall 2008 - UNDER budget and AHEAD of schedule. The facility is now open 7-days-a-week serving residents and visitors.

Project partners now request assistance from the State of Alaska to complete the 9,000 square feet exhibit gallery. This is the final piece of the capital project and will be the showcase of the facility.

**Project Timeline:**

Beck Interiors, the exhibit fabrication and installation general contractor was selected in a competitive bid process in Fall 2008. We expect to sign a contract in January 2009. The current schedule has exhibit completion by mid-July 2009. Expenditures on this contract will occur beginning January 2009 and final payment should occur no later than September 2009.

**Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:**

Occupants with a 10 year lease agreement

**Grant Recipient Contact Information:**

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? ☒ Yes ☐ No